INTERMISSION III~
DIALOGUE:
SHIROGANE'S STORY

LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY...
THIS IS THE STORY OF A DISTANT MEMORY...
MAITRE GUY...
DO NOT BE AFRAID, ELEO-NORE.
AT THE END OF THESE TRACKS.
WHERE ARE THE NEXT AUTOMATA WAITING ...?
WHAT IS IT?

A LONELY JOURNEY... CARRYING A LARGE SUITCASE.

I WAS TRAVELING WITH MAITRE GUY.

FROM MY FIRST MOMENT OF AWARENESS ...

AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER ...

IS IT OKAY IF I JUST KEEP CALLING YOU SHIRO-GANE?
OF COURSE, YOUNG MASTER.
SFX: MMM, MMPH
MAITRE GUY IS THE ONLY ONE WHOM I RECALL USING IT...
HUH, SO YOUR REAL NAME IS ELEONORE?

4 SFX: MMM, MMM
BUT... I DON'T LIKE HIM VERY MUCH.
MAITRE GUY... I DUNNO. I GUESS I SHOULD FOR YOUR SAKE...

HE JUST SEEMS REALLY COLD.
SFX: SNORING
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"ALL"...? WHEN YOU SAY IT LIKE THAT IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE ARE A BUNCH OF SHIROGANE OUT THERE!
Ha ha ha!
BUT, YOUNG MASTER, HE SEEMS THAT WAY BECAUSE WE SHIROGANE HAVE ALL BEEN TRAINED TO KEEP A CERTAIN LEVEL OF COMPOSURE.
NOT AT ALL.
SORRY...
WAIT, DON'T TELL ME...
.....
5
THERE ARE MANY SHIROGANE IN THIS WORLD.
THAT IS EXACTLY RIGHT, YOUNG MASTER.
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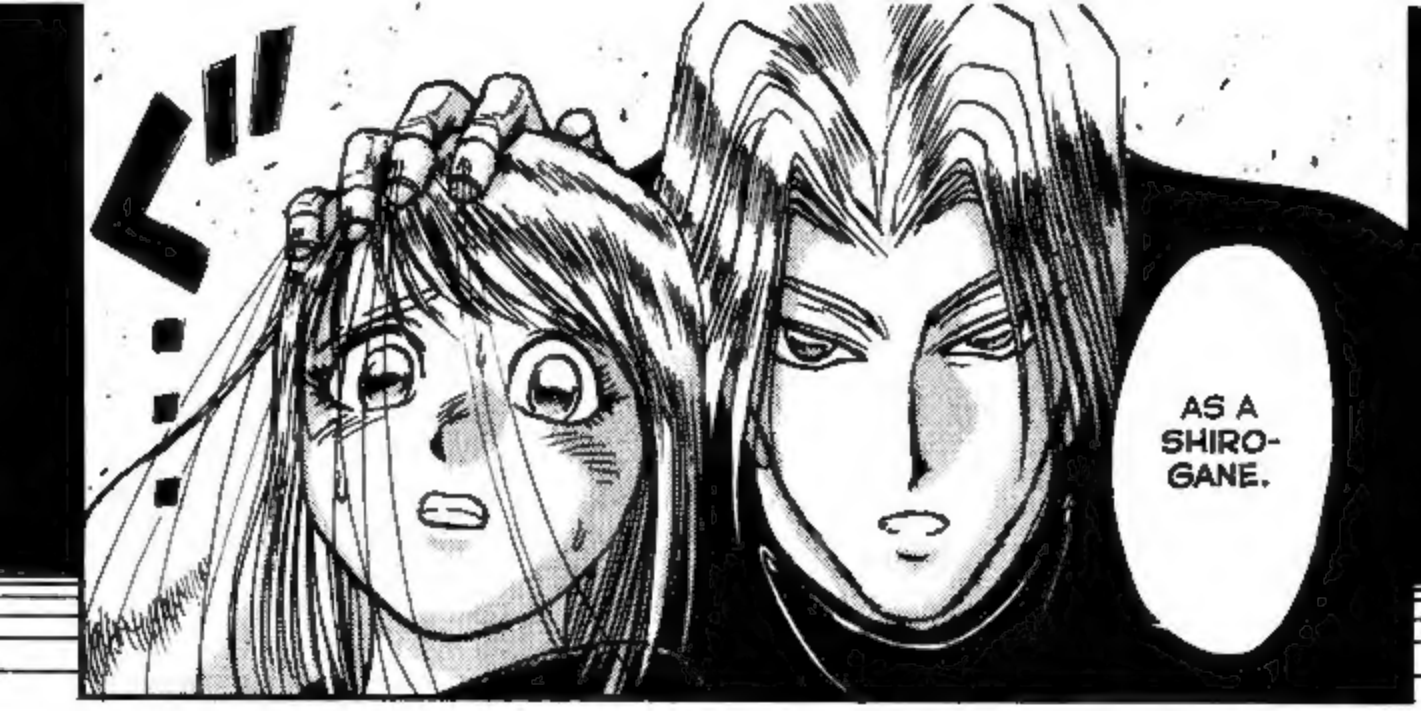
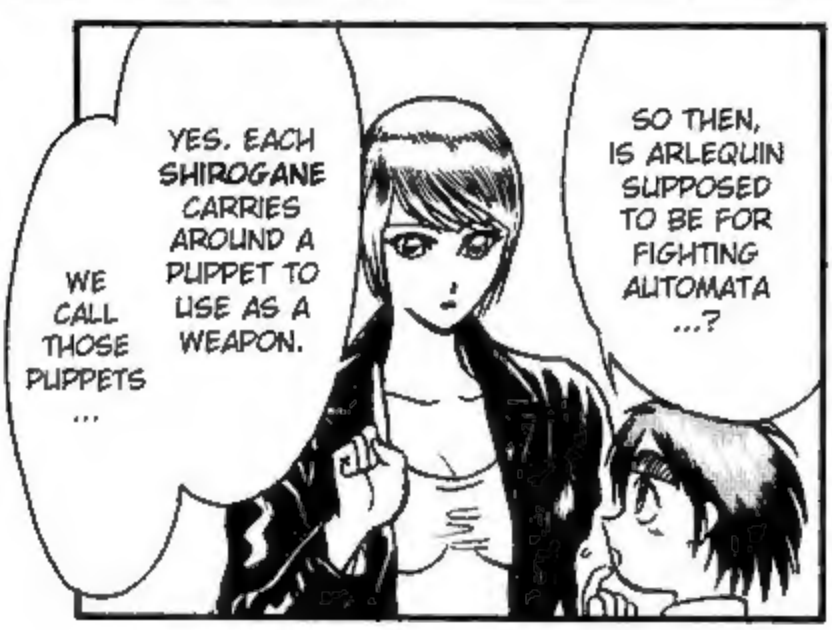
6
MAITRE ...!
DO NOT AVERT YOUR GAZE, ELEONORE.
THIS IS ONE OF THE AUTOMATA, THE DOLLS CAPABLE OF MOVING OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.
THIS IS THE ENEMY THAT YOU MUST FIGHT.


AS A SHIRO-GANE.

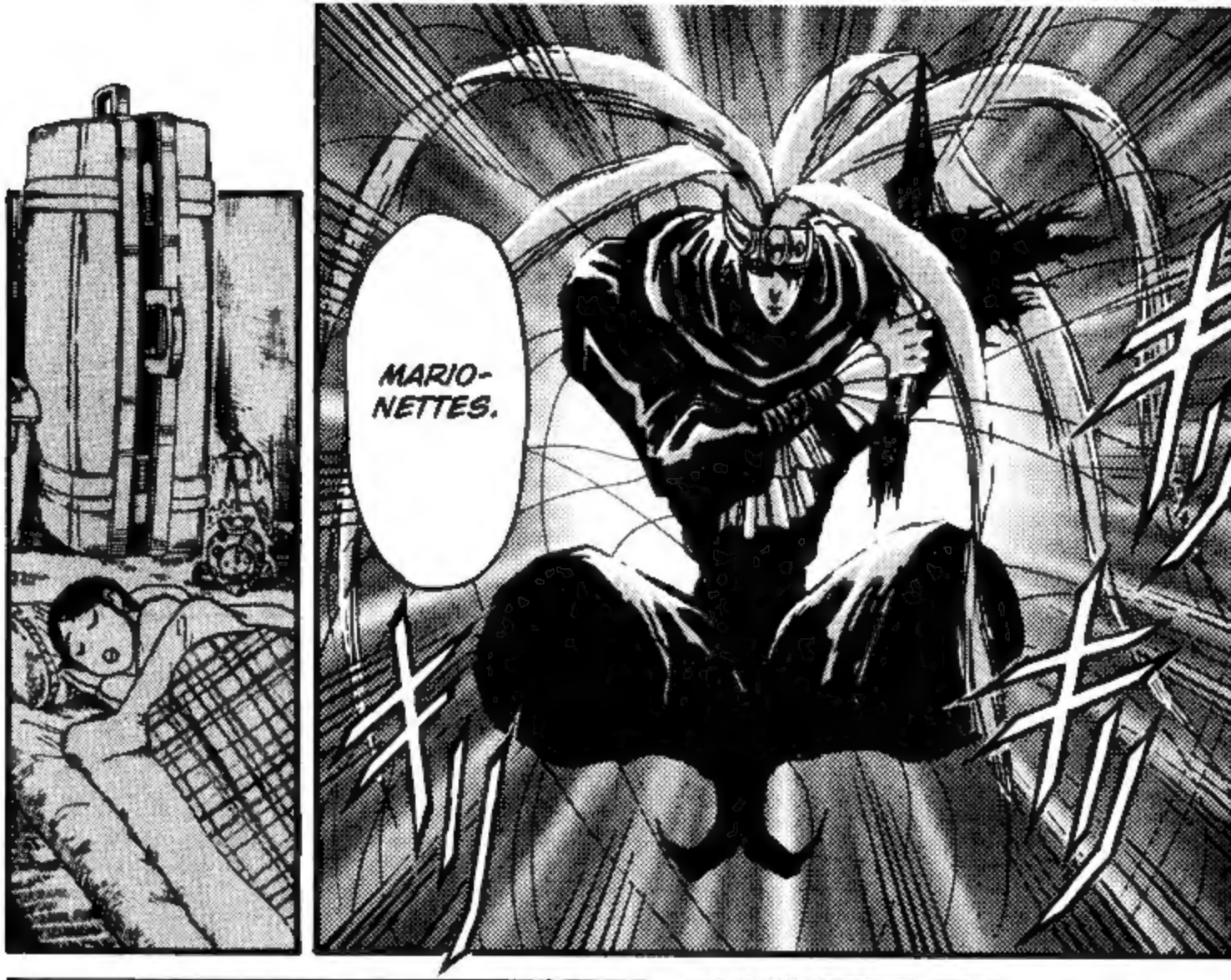
HUMAN-SHAPED MACHINES THAT DRAW POWER FROM DRINKING HUMAN BLOOD.
OH...!

S-SO, YOU'RE SAYING THAT SHIROGANE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO DESTROY THESE AUTO-SOMETHINGS THAT MOVE ON THEIR OWN?
AUTO-MATA... THE SINGULAR IS AUTO-MATON.

7


SO THEN, IS ARLEQUIN SUPPOSED TO BE FOR FIGHTING AUTOMATA ...?
YES. EACH SHIROGANE CARRIES AROUND A PUPPET TO USE AS A WEAPON.
WE CALL THOSE PUPPETS ...

LIKE THE ONE FROM BACK WHEN THAT PLANE CRASHED!
EXACTLY. THE ONE THAT ATTACKED YOU MUST HAVE BEEN IN THE MIDST OF A FIGHT WITH MAITRE GUY...


MARIO-
NETTES.

I WOULD EXPECT EVEN AN ADULT TO FIND THIS DIFFICULT TO TAKE IN ALL AT ONCE.
...YOU ARE QUITE MYSTE-RIOUS, YOUNG MASTER.
HMM, I GET IT. SO THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SO GOOD AT USING ARLEQUIN.

YES... I SUP-POSE SO.
AHAHA! I'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH A TON OF BIZARRE STUFF WITH YOU, SHIROGANE. AT THIS POINT IT'S MORE LIKE, WHAT *WOULDN'T* I BELIEVE?

SFX: WAVES
I WANNA KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU!
THAT'S RIGHT. SO I WANT YOU TO TELL ME MORE!!
WHEN I TURNED SEVEN, MY JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD WITH MAITRE GUY CAME TO AN END.
SFX: CAWING, FLAPPING
SFX: WAVES
HE BROUGHT ME TO A PLACE IN FRANCE KNOWN AS QUIBERON.

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BEFORE THAT, HE TOLD ME THE GENERAL STORY.
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THAT THE AUTOMATA WERE BUILT A VERY LONG TIME AGO BY AN ALCHEMIST...
FOR THE PURPOSE OF VISITING SUFFERING UPON THE PEOPLE HE DESPISED.
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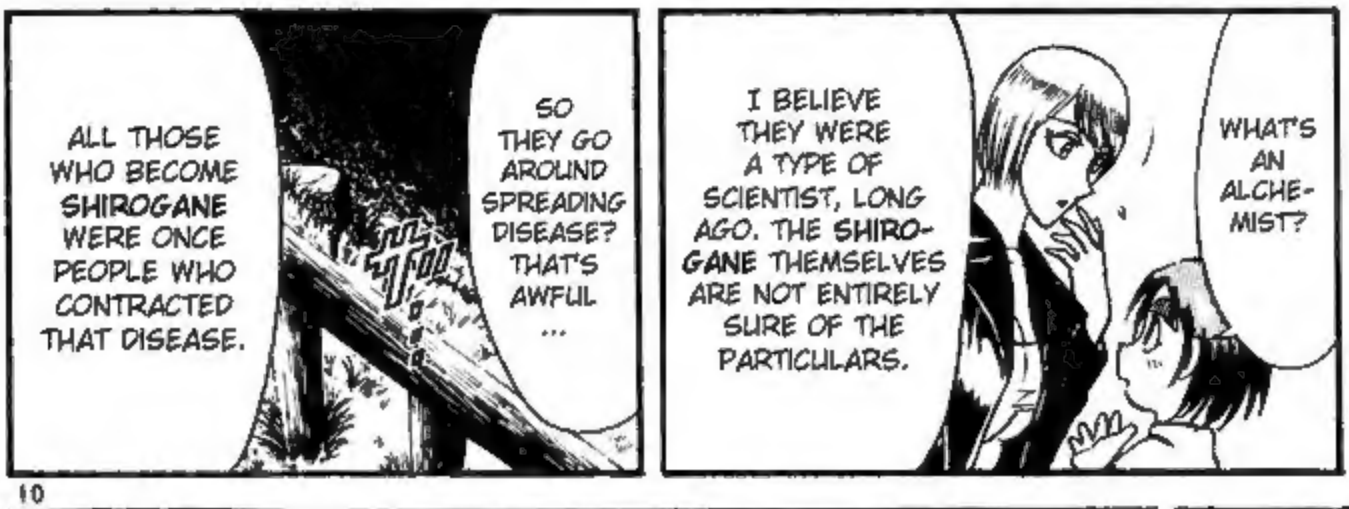
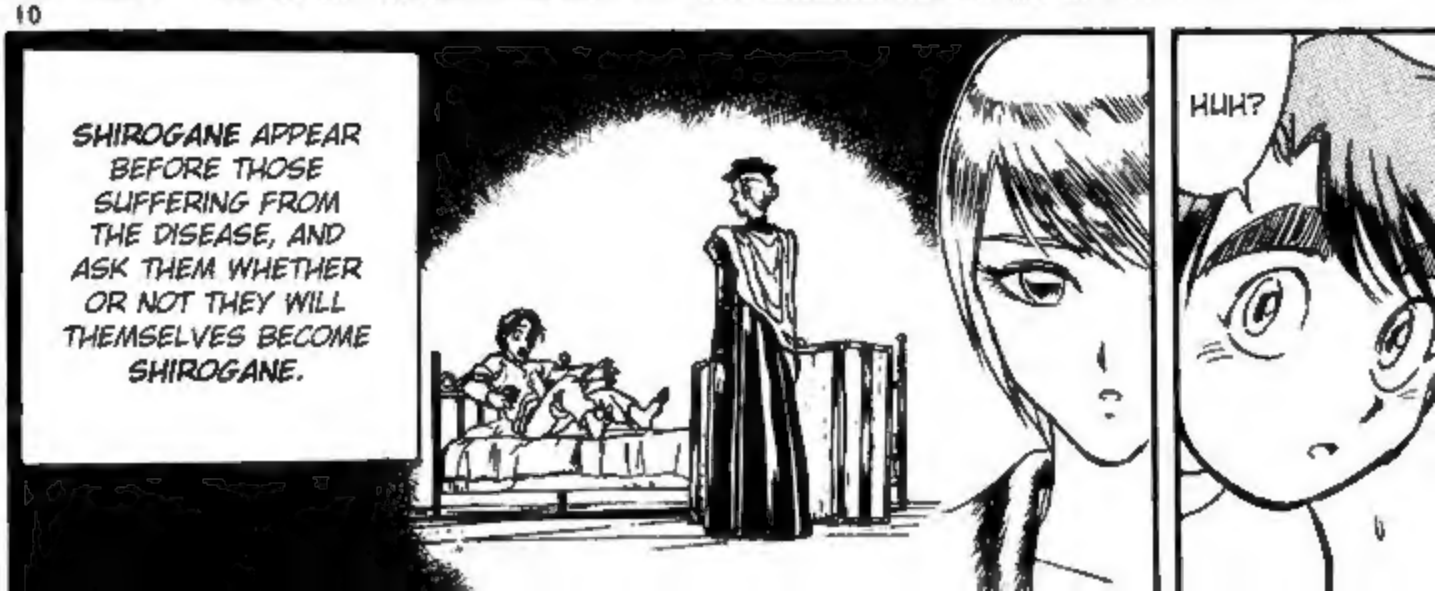
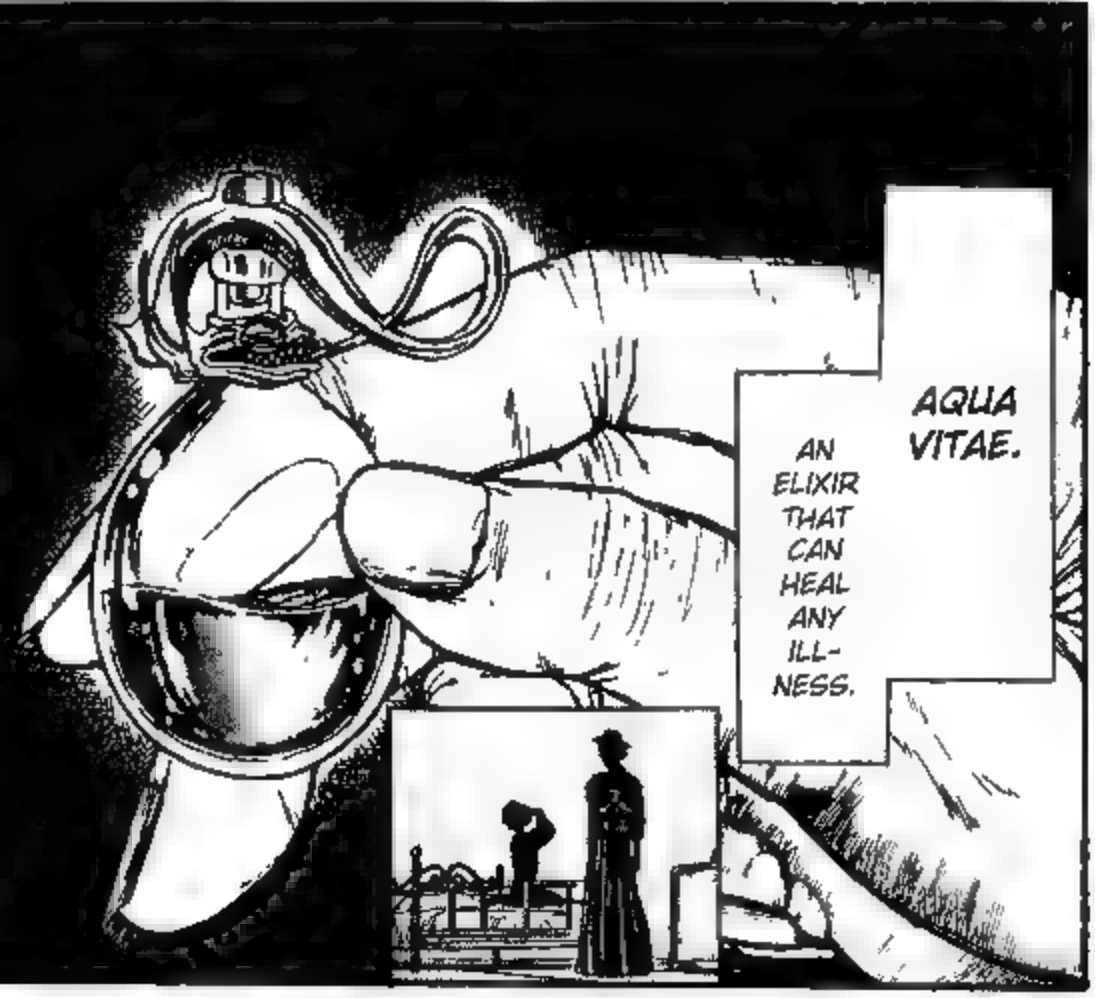
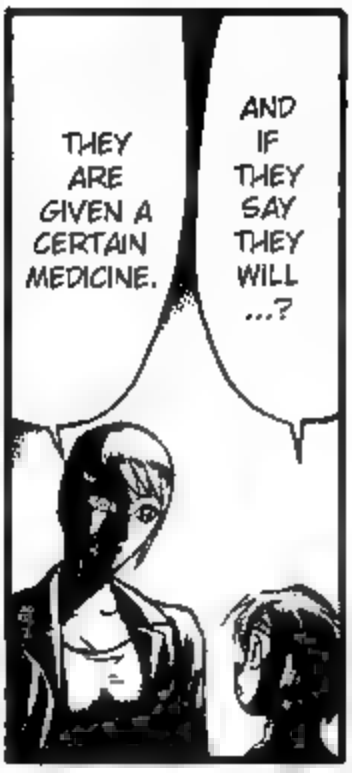
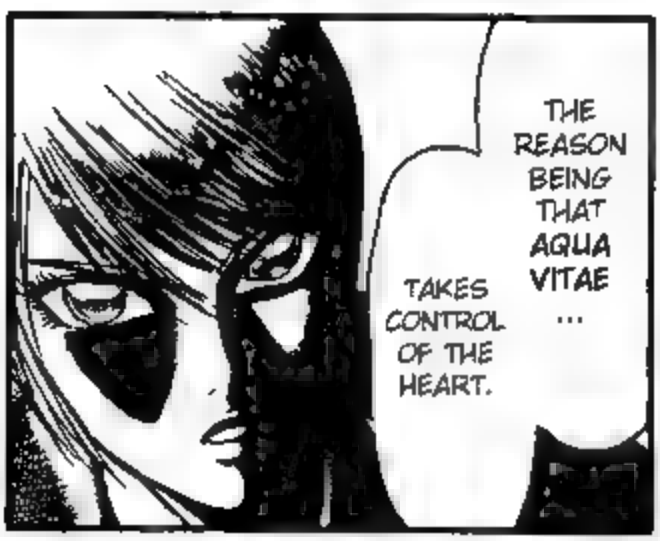
ヒュオオ
AND THAT AS THEY TRAVEL THE WORLD IN THE GUISE OF A CIRCUS ...
THEY SCATTER BEHIND THEM THE SEEDS OF THIS "SUFFERING"... OF WHICH MAITRE SAID ONLY THAT IT WAS AN ODD DISEASE.

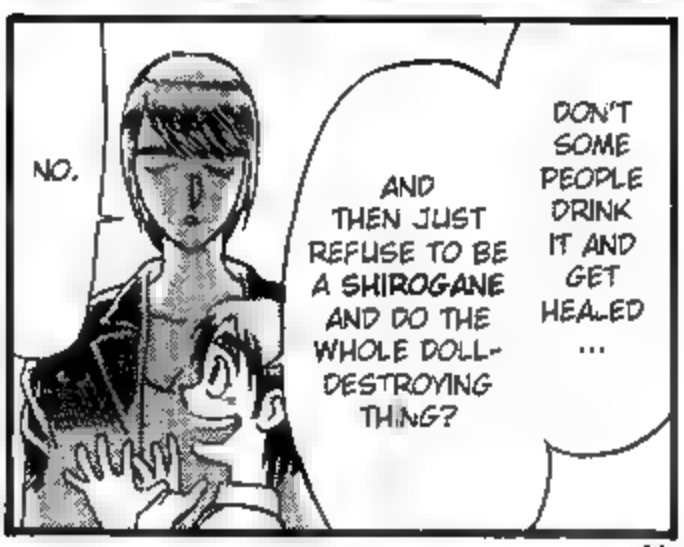

WHAT'S AN ALCHEMIST?
I BELIEVE THEY WERE A TYPE OF SCIENTIST, LONG AGO. THE SHIROGANE THEMSELVES ARE NOT ENTIRELY SURE OF THE PARTICULARS.
SO THEY GO AROUND SPREADING DISEASE? THAT'S AWFUL ...
ALL THOSE WHO BECOME SHIROGANE WERE ONCE PEOPLE WHO CONTRACTED THAT DISEASE.


HUH?
SHIROGANE APPEAR BEFORE THOSE SUFFERING FROM THE DISEASE, AND ASK THEM WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL THEMSELVES BECOME SHIROGANE.


AQUA VITAE.
AN ELIXIR THAT CAN HEAL ANY ILL-NESS.

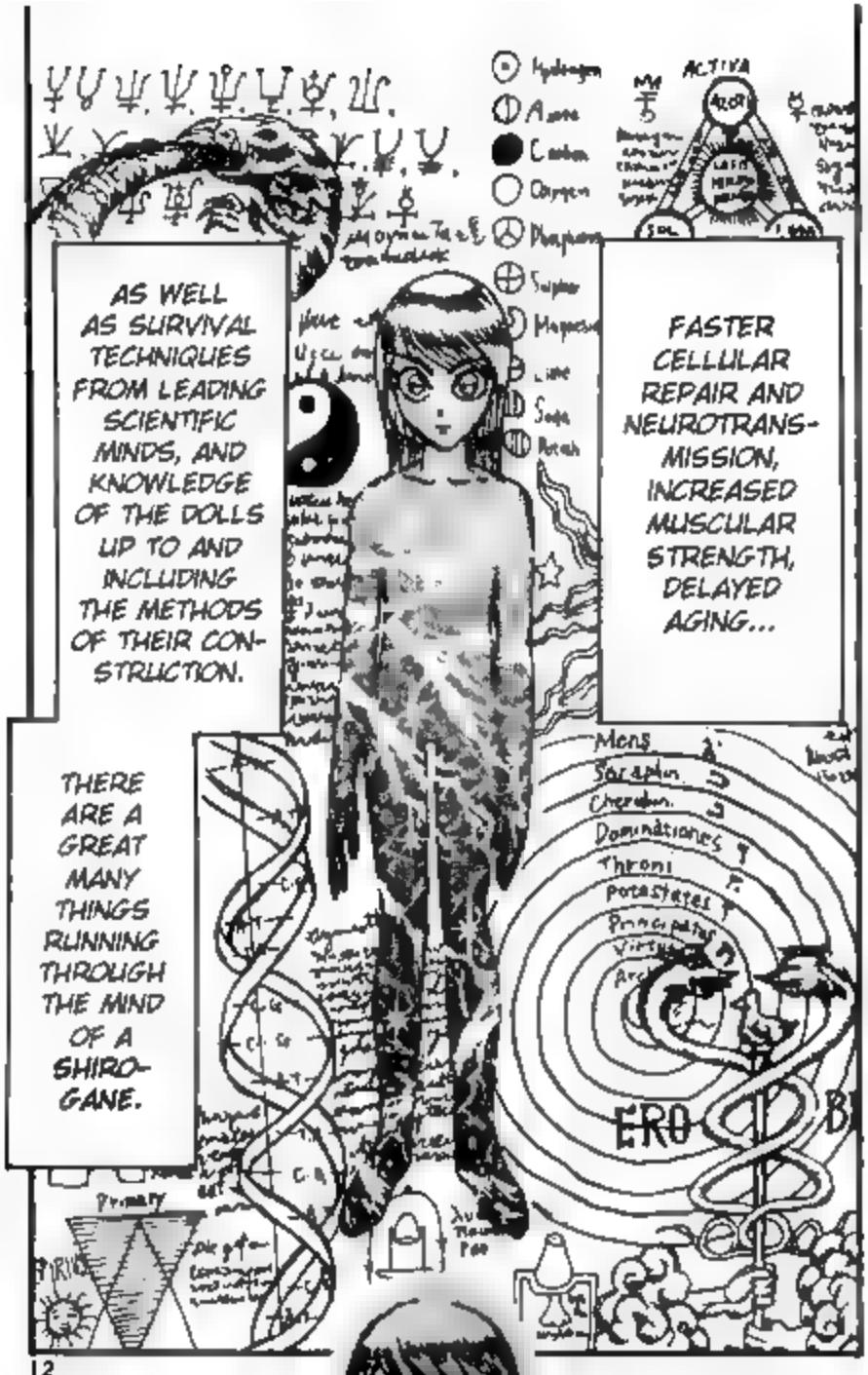

THEY ARE GIVEN A CERTAIN MEDICINE.
AND IF THEY SAY THEY WILL ...?


THE REASON BEING THAT AQUA VITAE ...
TAKES CONTROL OF THE HEART.

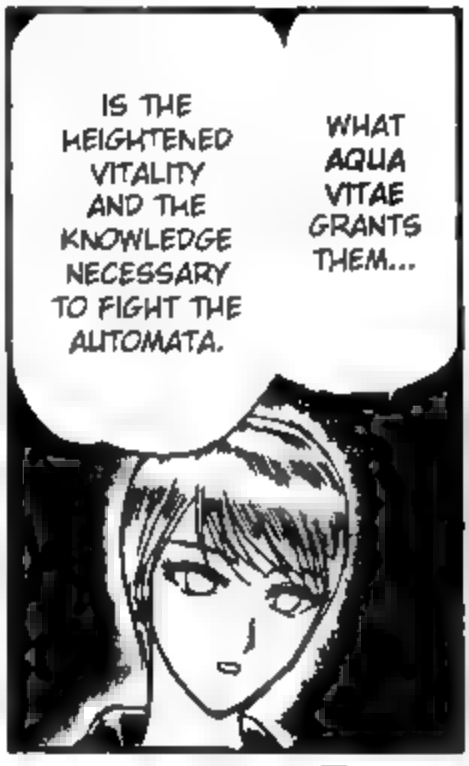

NO.
AND THEN JUST REFUSE TO BE A SHIROGANE AND DO THE WHOLE DOLL-DESTROYING THING?
DON'T SOME PEOPLE DRINK IT AND GET HEALED ...

THOUGH THEY HAVE ESCAPED THE DISEASE, THOSE WHO BECOME SHIROGANE ARE BOUND BY CHAINS OF HATRED FOR THE AUTOMATA.

DESTROY THE AUTO-MATA!


AS WELL AS SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES FROM LEADING SCIENTIFIC MINDS, AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOLLS UP TO AND INCLUDING THE METHODS OF THEIR CONSTRUCTION.
FASTER CELLULAR REPAIR AND NEUROTRANSMISSION, INCREASED MUSCULAR STRENGTH, DELAYED AGING...
THERE ARE A GREAT MANY THINGS RUNNING THROUGH THE MIND OF A SHIROGANE.
Hydrogen
Arsenic
Carbon
Oxygen
Phosphorus
Sulphur
Magnesium
Lime
Soda
Potash
ACTIVA
Mens
Seraphim
Cherubim
Dominationes
Throni
Potestates
Principatus
Virtutes
Archangeli
ERO
Primary

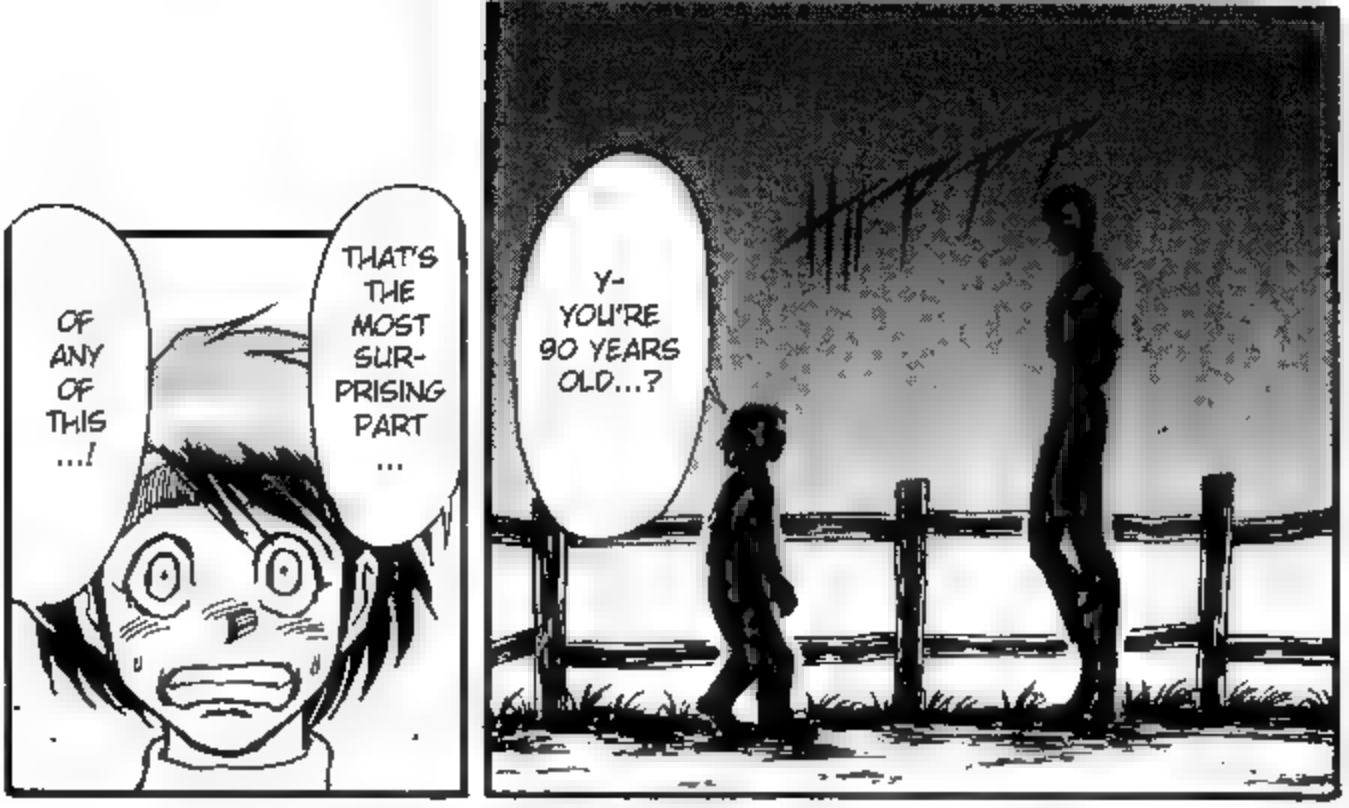
SO THEN ...


IS THE HEIGHTENED VITALITY AND THE KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO FIGHT THE AUTOMATA.
WHAT AQUA VITAE GRANTS THEM...

I HAVE BEEN ALIVE FOR 90 YEARS.
YES, YOUNG MASTER.

TIME PASSES QUITE SLOWLY FOR A SHIROGANE.
"DE-LAYED AGING" ...?
"DE- ...

MORE SLOWLY ...? SHIROGANE ...
SO YOU GET OLDER ...



SFX: WOBBLE WOBBLE

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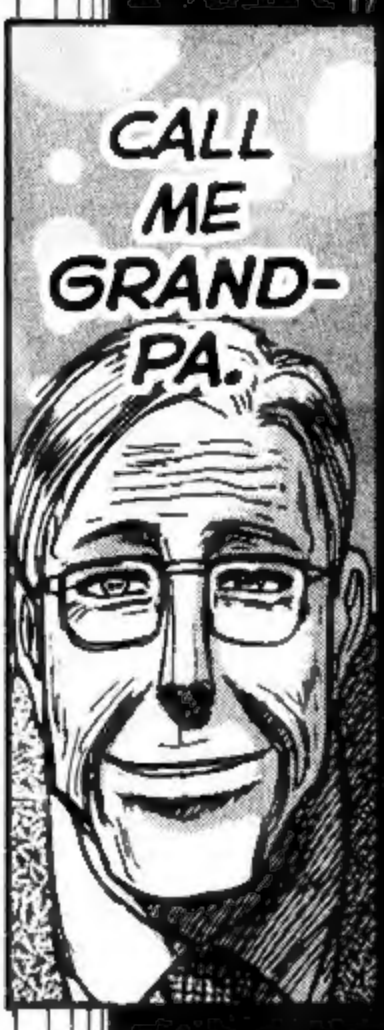
ALL THOSE WHO BECOME SHIROGANE TRAVEL THERE TO BE TRAINED IN THE ART OF USING A MARIONETTE.
SO, ANYWAY, SHIRO-GANE ...
WHY DID YOU GO TO QUIBE-RON?
"KNOWING HOW" AND "BEING ABLE" ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT THINGS, YOUNG MASTER. WE MUST PRACTICE THE METHODS PHYSICALLY BEFORE WE CAN USE THEM.
HUH? BUT SHOULDN'T THAT HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE THINGS YOU LEARNED FROM DRINKING AQUA VITAE?
EXPECT NO LENIENCE SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU ARE A CHILD.
WE SHALL BE TRAINING YOU AS OF TODAY.
YOU ARE ELEONORE?

MY TRAINING THERE WAS LONELY AND PAINFUL.
DO NOT FIX YOUR EYES ON A SINGLE POINT. YOU MUST WATCH EVERY-THING!
KEEP YOUR FINGERS ELAS-TIC!
YOUR WRISTS ARE TOO STIFF!
ONCE MORE, FROM THE BE-GIN-NING.
STAND UP, ELE-ONORE!
YOU MUST BECOME A PUPPET WIELDING A PUPPET.
ABANDON THE FEELING OF PAIN. CAST IT AWAY ALONG WITH YOUR NAME.
DOES THIS HURT, ELEO-NORE?
YOU ARE A PUP-PET.
CAST AWAY YOUR EMOTIONS AS WELL. GRIEF, JOY, EVERY-THING.

DESTROY THE DOLLS. EARTH RETURNS TO EARTH, AND PUPPET TO PUPPET.
16
FOR MANY LONG YEARS AFTER THAT, I DID NOTHING BUT STUDY HOW TO CONTROL MARIONETTES, EVERY DAY.
THAT'S HORRIBLE ...
AND THEN, ONE DAY, WHEN I NO LONGER EVEN DOUBTED THAT I WAS ONE...
AND I BECAME JUST LIKE A REAL PUPPET.
BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY FACIAL EXPRESSIONS HAD VANISHED ...
ELEONORE, THIS IS THE HEAD OF THE SAIGA FAMILY IN JAPAN. IT IS THEY WHO CONSTRUCT OUR MARIONETTES.
GREET HIM.
HE APPEARED BEFORE ME.

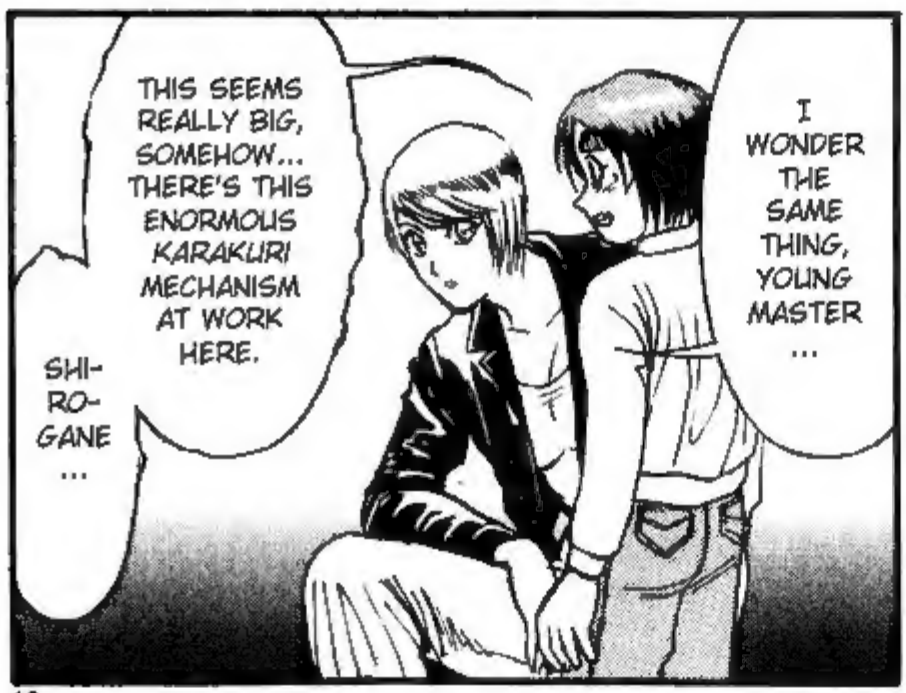
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, ELEONORE.
MY NAME IS SAIGA SHOUJI.
NO ...

GRAND-PA...
THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I MET SHOUJI-SAMA... YOUR GRANDFATHER.


CALL ME GRAND-PA.

YOU MUST PROTECT A CHILD BY THE NAME OF MASARU.
YES. AND YOUR GRAND-FATHER GAVE ME AN ORDER.

SO... HE KNEW ABOUT THEM, AND ABOUT THE AUTOMATA?
GRANDPA WAS... THE ONE WHO BUILT MARIONETTES FOR THE SHIROGANE ...
YOU WON'T BE A PUPPET ANY LONGER... SHIROGANE ...
IF YOU DO THAT, YOU WILL BECOME HUMAN.


SHI-RO-GANE ...
THIS SEEMS REALLY BIG, SOMEHOW... THERE'S THIS ENORMOUS KARAKURI MECHANISM AT WORK HERE.
I WONDER THE SAME THING, YOUNG MASTER ...

WHY DID GRANDPA BRING YOU AND ME TO-GETHER?
SO THEN, WHERE DO I COME IN?

AM I JUST ONE MORE GEAR IN THAT HUGE KARAKURI MECHANISM?
AND GRANDPA ...

translation by funnuraba.tumblr.com

NOTES:

As a reminder, "doll" and "puppet" have different connotations in English, but in the Japanese text they are the same word, *ningyou* (人形: *person* + *shape*).

 # pg. 6: The kanji that are given the reading Automata (オートマータ) are 自動人形 (*self* + *moving* + *doll*). Guy uses the characters for *self* and *moving* in a longer clause before putting them together, calling the Automata 自分で動く 自動人形 (*jibun de ugoku jidou-ningyou*).

 # pg. 7: When Shirogane mentions turning seven, she's referring to her physical age, not the number of years she's lived.

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Thanks to Judash137 on the mangafox forums for removing the Japanese text, and to the anonymous person who tipped me off to that!

Any group with more experience or skill is welcome to take over at any time or to redo chapters I have already done if they are below the quality that this series deserves.